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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#) [DR](#)

SUBJECT: DOMINICAN MFA OFFICIAL COMMENTS THAT "COMPACT WITH  
THE CUBAN PEOPLE" BENEFITS CASTRO

REF: STATE 113702

11. (SBU) Summary. In response to shared points regarding the "Compact with the Cuban People," Embassy received a four page written response by Ambassador Danilo P. Clime, Director of the Caribbean Affairs Section of the Dominican Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Clime asserts in his response that, given U.S. history in the region, the manner in which the Compact is written, including specific guarantees of basic service provision during a democratic transition and warnings against third-party interference, allows it to easily be misrepresented as an imperialist manifesto. He considers the Compact to play directly into the hands of Castro and those others hoping to perpetuate a communist dictatorship. We see Clime's intellectual distance from Cuban realities as characteristic of the ruling PLD party. End summary.

12. (U) The Embassy's delivery of reftel points on the "Compact with the Cuban People" elicited a lengthy written commentary from the Dominican Foreign Ministry official Amb. Danilo P. Clime, responsible for Caribbean affairs. Poloff contacted Clime to determine whether his reply was personal or official.

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Danilo P. Clime  
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12. (U) The tone of Clime's missive and personal conversation, suggest Clime is primarily an academic. He holds advanced degrees in general social studies, law and international relations, and strategic studies on security and defense. He has served as a professor for the bulk of his professional career at both the Technological Institute of Santo Domingo (INTEC) and the Technological Institute of Santiago (Dominican Republic) (UTESA). He identifies himself as a "sociologist", is popularly described as such, and is the author of several books dealing with sociological themes as they apply to the Dominican Republic. He is a minor media figure -- serving as co-host of the local television show "Sondeo" ("Opinion-Taking").

13. (SBU) Clime is no longer politically active in any real sense, though he was an active communist party member prior to his expulsion in 1977 for "revisionism." Subsequent work as the Executive Director of the Dominican Federation of Merchandisers suggests that he substantially modified his early beliefs.

14. (SBU) Clime's presence at the Foreign Ministry under both Fernandez administrations (previously as an

Ambassador-at-large) reflects the ruling Dominican Liberation Party's (PLD) historic ties with the left, as well as President Fernandez's affinity for academics and academia. Clime's comments should be viewed as generally in-line with PLD and governmental policy.

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Clime on the "Compact with the Cuban People"  
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-- U.S. History and the "Latin" Mind

¶5. (U) Clime suggests that the U.S. history in the region presents the United States with a complicated policy environment. While the explicit post-Cold War goal of the United States to construct functional democracies in Latin America is highly appreciated and marks an important reference point for U.S.-Latin American relations, the longer-term history of the United States in the region is one of governmental relations based on misinformation, stereotypes, and to a certain degree, demonization and latent resentment. Despite this difficult environment, all agree, including "anti-imperialist" Cubans with whom Clime has had limited contact, that the United States will and should play a "starring role" in any democratic transition process involving Cuba.

¶6. (U) Clime holds, however, that in doing so the United States must consider that reliance on emotion, speculation, and conjecture are principal features of Latin political culture. That is to say, given the history of U.S. relations with Latin America and the Latin penchant for "discovering" hidden agendas, any rational statements of policy will certainly be read regionally with an eye for conspiracy and intervention.

-- The Role of the Exile Community

¶7. (U) In an attempt to demonstrate the risks posed by non-analytical political thinking, Clime offers a Dominican example: the upheaval immediately following the assassination of General Rafael Trujillo in 1961. Clime attributes much of the discord to returning exiles who, emotion-driven, failed to recognize that their lengthy disconnect from Dominican public life caused them to lack both legitimacy and credibility in the political sphere.

¶8. (SBU) By characterizing both the Dominican Republic under Trujillo and Cuba under Castro as personality-based dictatorships, Clime implicitly warns that U.S. support for Cuban exile groups, participation in any democratic transition would be counter-productive.

¶9. (SBU) Clime expanded on this point, suggesting that large segments of the Cuban internal resistance movement have already signaled an unwillingness to accept the direction of potential leaders in exile. He takes the time specifically to repudiate the position of the Cuban-American Foundation (FNCA) as particularly disruptive. For Clime, the FNCA's declaration that it "will not negotiate with those with blood-stained hands" runs the risk of creating a significant political void. Clime says that the resulting void could be dangerous (a parallel might be found in the stringent de-Baathification following the Coalition's victory in Operation Iraqi Freedom). He also highlights a recent clash of strategy between Cuba's internal dissidents (especially Vladimiro Roca) and the Cuban exile community -- while Roca and others called for reserved debate during the Elian Gonzalez crisis, this course of action was emphatically not followed by the "Calle 8" exile community in Miami.

-- Warning to "Third Parties" Confusing and Unnecessary

¶10. (SBU) Considering the exile community to be essentially a third party, Clime suggests that the U.S. position "discouraging third parties from intervening and interfering with the will of the Cuban people" is, at best, ambiguous.

This warning (which Clime assumes to be aimed at Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez), is unnecessary, in his view. Despite the early success of insurgent, messianic, populist "anti-imperialist" movements in Venezuela and Bolivia, Chavista movements in Peru and Mexico have not met with success. The majority of Latin Americans remain blase when confronted with this type of movement in any case.

-- Assertion: U.S. Actions Provide Cover for Castro

¶11. (SBU) How do these radical movements survive given that the majority of Latin Americans reject the underlying philosophy? For Clime, it is because the regimes in question are able to rally nationalists to their cause. Clime hypothesizes that personality-based dictatorships are inherently unstable; the erosion of institutions creates vacancies in the public space at the same time it reduces the legitimacy and credibility of government interlocutors. The ability of the regime to survive rests on its ability nevertheless to present convincing arguments for credibility.

Castro has been able to do this over the last forty years by constantly reinforcing the concept of the external enemy. In socialist or communist regimes the watchword is "imperialism," that is anti-Americanism. In Latin American regimes, a predisposition to assume the worst of U.S. intentions makes it that much easier to play the "nationalist" or "anti-imperialist" card in the face even of innocuous U.S. policy statements. Clime says, "For this reason, the United States should at all costs avoid the appearance of direct intervention in Cuba."

¶12. (SBU) However, as Clime notes, this is precisely the approach of the announced plan. The "blunt manner" in which the United States provides guarantees of foodstuffs, water, and fuel, combined with plans for U.S. assistance in reconstructing the Cuban economy, evokes precisely the direct intervention in Cuban "internal affairs" that drives forward Castro's anti-imperialist message.

-- "Removing Blockade Would Undercut Castro's Support"

¶13. (SBU) Rather than pursuing publication of the Compact (which Clime views as nothing more than a contingency plan for the eventual passage of Castro from the political scene),

Clime proposes the abandonment of the current "blockade" against Cuba. Clime suggests that dropping this "ineffective blockade" would be a proactive step leading to the collapse of communism in Cuba, much as socialism collapsed in the former Soviet Bloc after exposure to the West.

¶14. (U) Reintegration of Cuba into the international community and the western hemisphere would result in increased scrutiny by international courts, the dynamic opening of commerce, and the dismantling of the fundamental base of Castro's legitimacy, which, after all, is a principal goal of the United States in the region.

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COMMENT  
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¶15. (SBU) Clime's analysis is probably very close to that of the ruling PLD and President Fernandez. They take a relatively cool, intellectual view of Cuba, unwilling to challenge the repressive authoritarianism of Castro and his government, in part because Cuban ideologues supported the resistance against Dominican dictator Trujillo and the armed expedition in 1973 against the autocratic Balaguer. Although that Cuban-supported intervention failed, many Dominicans, even today, consider its participants to be martyrs for democracy. Even the conservative Hipolito Mejia thought long and hard before directing his foreign minister to vote in favor of the Cuba resolution at UNHCR in 2004.

¶16. (SBU) Under the ousted and then defeated Juan Bosch, the PLD was born in the 1970's as a disciplined association of believers in Marxism and "imposed democracy," a group that included the young and impressionable Fernandez. They have

had the luxury of witnessing the long failure of Cuban domestic politics while benefiting from the pluralism and gradual positive evolution of the Dominican electoral system. Cuba is something of an embarrassment to them -- which is, perhaps, one of the reasons that the PLD has so carefully ignored the human rights abuses of the Castro government.

¶17. This and similar reporting may be found on the Embassy's SIPRNET website at:

<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/santodomingo>.

BULLEN